

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Canceled)

2. (previously presented) A method for a computer repairing itself to an operational status at any time during operation, the method comprising the computer-executed steps of:

booting from a first hard disk drive boot device disposed within a main computer hardware box of the computer;

then, in response to receiving a signal indicating a need for repair of the computer during the booting or during any operating state, booting from a second hard disk drive boot device; the second hard disk drive boot device being physically present within the main computer hardware box of the computer prior to receiving the signal indicating a need for repair; and

then repairing software on the first hard disk drive boot device while booted from the second hard disk drive boot device and selectively either: (i) maintaining operation of the computer from the second boot device to restore operational status of the computer during repairing of the software on the first hard disk device, or (ii) changing to operation of the computer from the second boot device to the first boot device to restore operational status of the computer,

wherein the signal is generated by a user altering the state of a physical switch different from an on-off switch of the computer and exposed on an exterior surface of the main computer hardware box of the computer

at anytime prior to booting from the second hard disk drive boot device, installing software onto the second boot device and protecting the second boot device from further modification.

2. (Currently Amended) A method for a computer repairing itself to an operational status at any time during operation, the method comprising the computer-executed steps of:

booting from a first hard disk drive boot device disposed within a main computer hardware box of the computer;

then, in response to receiving a signal indicating a need for repair of the computer during the booting or during any operating state, booting from a second ~~hard disk drive boot~~

device; the second ~~hard disk drive~~ boot device being physically present within the main computer hardware box of the computer prior to receiving the signal indicating a need for repair; and

then repairing software on the first hard disk drive boot device while booted from the second ~~hard disk drive~~ boot device and selectively either: (i) maintaining operation of the computer from the second boot device to restore operational status of the computer during repairing of the software on the first hard disk device, or (ii) changing to operation of the computer from the second boot device to the first boot device to restore operational status of the computer,

at anytime prior to booting from the second hard disk drive boot device, installing software onto the second boot device and protecting the second boot device from further modification;

the step of protecting comprising one of: (a) switching the second boot device to a state of unavailability; and (b) switching the second boot device to a read-only state; and

wherein the signal is generated by a user altering the state of a physical switch different from an on-off switch of the computer and exposed on an exterior surface of the main computer hardware box of the computer.

3. (previously presented) The method of claim 2, wherein the step of repairing software comprises:

automatically repairing software on the first boot device.

4. (previously presented) The method of claim 3; wherein the step of automatically repairing software comprises:

automatically repairing software on the first boot device without further direction from the user.

5. (previously presented) The method of claim 3, wherein the step of automatically repairing software comprises:

repairing software on the first boot device according to preset preferences.

6. (previously presented) The method of claim 5, wherein the repairing according to preset preferences comprises:

repairing according to whether
to recover data;

to run a virus check;
to reformat the first boot device;
to revert to a backup; or
to run diagnostics.

7. (previously presented) The method of claim 2, wherein the step of repairing software comprises:

reformatting the first boot device; and
then copying software onto the first boot device.

8. (previously presented) The method of claim 2, wherein the step of repairing software comprises:

resetting parameters in a persistent memory; and
then copying software onto the first boot device.

9. (previously presented) The method of claim 2, further comprising the step of: directing a user to re-boot from the first boot device.

10. (previously presented) The method of claim 2, wherein before the step of booting from the second boot device, the following step is performed: installing software onto the second boot device.

11. (previously presented) The method of claim 10, wherein the step of installing software onto the second boot device comprises one method from the following set of methods:

a. installing software onto the second boot device;
b. copying installed software onto the second boot device;
c. copying installation software onto the second boot device; and
d. writing onto the second boot device a version of an operating environment running as a result of the boot from the first boot device.

12. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 10~~11~~, wherein the version of the operating environment comprises a template of an operating environment, ~~step of installing software onto the second boot device comprises one method from the following set of methods:~~

~~a. installing software onto the second boot device;~~

~~_____ b. copying installed software onto the second boot device;~~
~~_____ c. copying installation software onto the second boot device; and~~
~~_____ d. writing onto the second boot device a template of an operating environment running as a result of the boot from the first boot device.~~

13. (previously presented) The method of claim 10, wherein after the step of installing and before the step of booting from the second boot device, the following step is performed:

updating the software installed onto the second boot device.

14. (previously presented) The method of claim 10, wherein after the step of installing and before the step of booting from the second boot device, the following step is performed:

protecting the second boot device from further modification.

15. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 14, A method for a computer repairing itself to an operational status at any time during operation, the method comprising the computer-executed steps of:

_____ booting from a first hard disk drive boot device disposed within a main computer hardware box of the computer;

_____ then, in response to receiving a signal indicating a need for repair of the computer during the booting or during any operating state, booting from a second hard disk drive boot device; the second hard disk drive boot device being physically present within the main computer hardware box of the computer prior to receiving the signal indicating a need for repair; and

_____ then repairing software on the first hard disk drive boot device while booted from the second hard disk drive boot device and selectively either: (i) maintaining operation of the computer from the second boot device to restore operational status of the computer during repairing of the software on the first hard disk device, or (ii) changing to operation of the computer from the second boot device to the first boot device to restore operational status of the computer;

_____ wherein the signal is generated by a user altering the state of a physical switch different from an on-off switch of the computer and exposed on an exterior surface of the main computer hardware box of the computer; and

_____ at anytime prior to booting from the second hard disk drive boot device, installing software onto the second boot device and protecting the second boot device from further

modification; wherein the step of protecting comprises one of: (a) switching the second boot device to a state of unavailability; and (b) switching the second boot device to a read-only state.

16. (previously presented) The method of claim 2, wherein before the step of repairing software the following step is performed:
offering a user a choice of thoroughness of repair.

17. (previously presented) The method of claim 2, wherein before the step of booting from the second boot device, the following step is performed:
automatically monitoring an operating environment running as a result of the booting from the first boot device.

18. (previously presented) The method of claim 17, further comprising the step of:
detecting an undesirable change in the operating environment; and
generating the signal indicating a need for repair in response to the detection.

19. (previously presented) The method of claim 2, wherein before the step of booting from the second boot device, the following step is performed:
automatically searching for boot devices.

20. (previously presented) A method for a computer repairing itself to an operational status at any time during operation, the method comprising the computer-executed steps of:

booting from a first hard disk drive boot device disposed within a main computer hardware box of the computer;

then, in response to receiving a signal indicating a need for repair of the computer during the booting or during any operating state, booting from a second hard disk drive boot device; the second hard disk drive boot device being physically present within the main computer hardware box of the computer prior to receiving the signal indicating a need for repair; and

then repairing software on the first hard disk drive boot device while booted from the second hard disk drive boot device and selectively either: (i) maintaining operation of the computer from the second boot device to restore operational status of the computer during repairing of the software on the first hard disk device, or (ii) changing to operation of the

computer from the second boot device to the first boot device to restore operational status of the computer;

wherein before the step of repairing software the following step is performed: offering a user a choice of thoroughness of repair selected from the set of repairs consisting of a quick repair that re-installs or copies template software without first re-formatting, a better repair that performs a high-level re-format before that copy or re-installation of software, and a best repair that performs a low-level re-format before copying over or re-installing software.

21. (Cancelled)

22. (New) A computer that repairs itself to an operational status at any time during operation, the computer comprising:

a main computer hardware box;

a bootable first hard disk drive boot device disposed within the main computer hardware box;

a bootable second hard disk drive boot device, the bootable second hard disk drive having software installed onto the second boot device at anytime prior to booting from the second hard disk drive boot device that is protected from further modification by at least one of (a) switching the second boot device to a state of unavailability; or (b) switching the second boot device to a read-only state;

a switching logic responsive to receiving a signal indicating a need for repair of the computer during the booting or during any operating state, that controls booting of the computer from a second hard disk drive boot device; the second hard disk drive boot device being physically present within the main computer hardware box of the computer prior to receiving the signal indicating a need for repair; and

means for repairing software on the first hard disk drive boot device while booted from the second hard disk drive boot device that selectively either: (i) maintains operation of the computer from the second boot device to restore operational status of the computer during repairing of the software on the first hard disk device, or (ii) changes to operation of the computer from the second boot device to the first boot device to restore operational status of the computer; and

a switch, different from an on-off switch of the computer and exposed on an exterior surface of the main computer hardware box of the computer, adapted to generate the signal when operated by an external user to altering the state of the switch.